



## Newsletter for English Teachers November 2005

This Newsletter for English Teachers is a monthly publication by the Information Resource Centers in Germany. It focuses on American Studies topics of relevance to our academic audiences.

### In this issue:

Feature of the Month: The Changing Face of America \* Native American Indian Heritage Month \* Thanksgiving \* Millions More Movement \* Rosa Parks \*  
New publication: How the U.S. is Governed \* Articles & Web Site Suggestions

### The Changing Face of America

**Audrey Singer** (Source: E-journal: *The United States in 2005: Who We Are Today*)  
*The author looks at contemporary shifts in America's racial and ethnic composition, and shares some thoughts on the country's future diversity. In 1970, the United States could be defined, racially, essentially in terms of black and white. But during the past three decades, immigrants from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean have enriched the country's diversity. As a consequence, U.S. citizens increasingly are defining themselves in multiracial terms. The government continues to collect data on the basis of racial and ethnic characteristics out of a commitment to enforce laws that prohibit discrimination and guarantee equal treatment and opportunity. "One strong reason for optimism," concludes the author, "is America's past history of incorporating diverse groups into one society and one nation."*

... there is no need of encouragement: while the policy or advantage of [immigration] taking place in a body (I mean the settling of them in a body) may be much questioned; for, by so doing, they retain the Language, habits and principles (good or bad) which they bring with them. Whereas by an intermixture with our people, they, or their descendants, get assimilated to our customs, measures and laws: in a word, soon become one people.  
- George Washington, in a letter to John Adams, November 15, 1794

Since the United States was founded more than 225 years ago, the question of who belongs to the country has been central to the national narrative. Contemporary debates about the levels of immigration and assimilation echo George Washington's earlier sentiments. However, today's issues about who belongs and how immigrants should adapt have been transformed several times over by successive waves of immigration, during which the national self-image has had to adjust to and recalibrate for newcomers of different origins. In doing so, America has somehow managed to bring disparate people

together socially, politically, and economically, while still allowing for individuals to claim their identities however they see fit. In the national consciousness, immigration seems to both reinforce and challenge the idea that America is a place where any person can belong.

However, the velocity and diversity of contemporary immigration are rapidly changing America's racial and ethnic mixture. And once again, immigration is raising anxieties about a fractured America. Might the terrorist attacks of September 2001, the aftermath of war in Iraq, and concerns about the economy lead to an erosion of the public's receptivity toward immigrants? Or will America continue to see opportunities in fresh waves of diverse immigrants and overcome the challenges?

Further complicating inter-group relations is the fact that contemporary immigration rests atop historical layers of the peopling of the United States. In particular, the legacies of slavery and conquest are important components of contemporary diversity in America. And the discrimination, racism, and resulting inequality are uneasy realities of how such historical processes can go badly.

Today's immigrants provide an additional test of the elasticity of the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the United States. While the U.S. government has always regulated the number of people admitted to the country, it does little directly to assist immigrants once they arrive. For example, the federal government does not offer language classes and job-training programs to the majority of immigrants. The assumption is that immigrants will find their way with the assistance of family and friends. And if they need more help, they can turn to community groups and religious organizations. However, on the social and cultural front, adapting to a diverse, continuously evolving America presents challenges to immigrant newcomers and established residents alike.

How has immigration during the 20th century changed the racial and ethnic composition of the United States? This essay examines contemporary shifts in that composition, and then looks at the future of diversity in America.

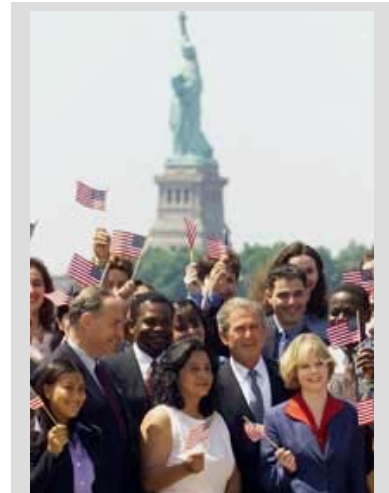
**Read more** <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/1204/ijse/singer.htm>

(source: The United States in 2005: Who We Are Today, U.S. Dept. of State E-journal)

**In German:**

**Das sich verändernde Erscheinungsbild der Vereinigten Staaten**

<http://amerikadienst.usembassy.de/us-botschaft-cgi/ad-detailad.cgi?lfdnr=1846>



President George W. Bush stands with 29 newly naturalized U.S. citizens in front of the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island in New York. (AP Photo/Ron Edmonds)

- **About the USA > Society** <http://usa.usembassy.de/society.htm>
- **The United States in 2005: Who We Are Today**  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/1204/ijse/ijse1204.htm>
- **Immigration: The Changing Face of America** (American Memory - Library of Congress) <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/immig/introduction.html>

## Native American Indian Heritage Month (November)

*Native American Indian Heritage Month is celebrated to recognize the intertribal cultures and to educate the public about the heritage, history, art and traditions of the American Indian and Alaskan Native people. It's origins go back to 1915, when the first "American Indian Day" was celebrated*

The first American immigrants, beginning more than 20,000 years ago, were intercontinental wanderers: hunters and their families following animal herds from Asia to America, across a land bridge where the Bering Strait is today. When Spain's Christopher Columbus "discovered" the New World in 1492, about 1.5 million Native Americans lived in what is now the continental United States, although estimates of the number vary greatly. Mistaking the place where he landed -- San Salvador in the Bahamas -- for the Indies, Columbus called the Native Americans "Indians."

During the next 200 years, people from several European countries followed Columbus across the Atlantic Ocean to explore America and set up trading posts and colonies. Native Americans suffered greatly from the influx of Europeans. The transfer of land from Indian to European -- and later American -- hands was accomplished through treaties, wars, and coercion, with Indians constantly giving way as the newcomers moved west. In the 19th century, the government's preferred solution to the Indian "problem" was to force tribes to inhabit specific plots of land called reservations. Some tribes fought to keep from giving up land they had traditionally used. In many cases the reservation land was of poor quality, and Indians came to depend on government assistance. Poverty and joblessness among Native Americans still exist today.

The territorial wars, along with Old World diseases to which Indians had no built-up immunity, sent their population plummeting, to a low of 350,000 in 1920. Some tribes

### Sovereignty of Indian Tribes

Federally recognized American Indian tribes are considered sovereign entities within the United States. This sovereign status—sometimes called "nation-within-a-nation"—is protected by treaty, federal law, and court rulings. Members of tribes are not subject to state or local income, sales, or property taxes, and states have little power to regulate Indians in tribal territories. Tribes have their own rule-making bodies and judicial systems to settle disputes arising on tribal lands or between tribal members. While significant, tribal sovereignty is not absolute; Indians are subject to federal taxes and to laws passed by the U.S. Congress.

### ■ Indian Languages

There were about 300 original Native North American (including Canadian) languages. Many became extinct, replaced by European languages. As many as 100 languages might still be spoken, although some only by a few elderly tribe members. Navajo is the most widely spoken Indian language in the United States with about 175,000 speakers.

Still, hundreds of Indian words can be found in everyday American English. They include words for:

**animals** such as: **skunk**, **raccoon**, **moose**;  
**objects** such as **canoe**, **toboggan**, **hammock**;  
**plants** such as **potato**, **tobacco**, **maize**;  
**events** such as **caucus**.

disappeared altogether; among them were the Mandans of North Dakota, who had helped Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in exploring America's unsettled northwestern wilderness in 1804-06. Other tribes lost their languages and most of their culture. Nonetheless, Native Americans have proved to be resilient. Today they number about two

million (0.8 percent of the total U.S. population), and only about one-third of Native Americans still live on reservations.

Countless American place-names derive from Indian words, including the states of

Massachusetts, Ohio, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, and Idaho. Indians taught Europeans how to cultivate crops that are now staples throughout the world: corn, tomatoes, potatoes, tobacco. Canoes, snowshoes, and moccasins are among the Indians' many inventions.

## ■ State Names

U.S. state names listed below come from Native American languages. Match the name and its origin:

Idaho	From the Chippewa word <i>meicigama</i> meaning <b>great water</b>
Alaska	From the Indian phrase <i>E Dah Hoe</i> meaning <b>gem of the mountains</b>
Arkansas	From the Chippewa word <i>Ouisconsin</i> meaning <b>grassy place</b>
Connecticut	From the Dakota Indian word <i>Ayuhwa</i> meaning <b>sleepy ones</b>
Iowa	After Cherokee Indian villages called <b>Tanasi</b>
Michigan	From the Aleutian word <i>Alakshak</i> meaning <b>great lands</b> or <b>peninsula</b>
Mississippi	From the Chippewa words <i>mici zibi</i> meaning <b>great river</b>
Oklahoma	From the Sioux word <i>acansa</i> meaning <b>downstream place</b>
Tennessee	From the Mohegan word <i>Quinnehtukqut</i> meaning <b>Long River Place</b>
Wisconsin	From the Choctaw words <i>okla</i> meaning people and <i>humma</i> meaning red

Source:  
bensguide.gpo.gov

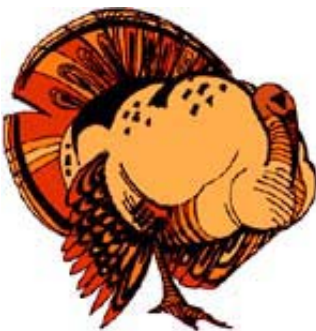
Read more at <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/factover/ch1.htm> (Portrait of America: One from Many)

In German <http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/soc/ausvieleins.htm>  
(Portrait of America: Aus Vielen Eins)

- **About the USA > Society > Native Americans**  
<http://usa.usembassy.de/society-natives.htm>
- **American Indian Heritage Month** (InfoPlease)  
<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/aihm1.html>
- **National Museum of the American Indian**  
<http://www.nmai.si.edu/>

\*\*\*

## THANKSGIVING (NOVEMBER 24, 2005)



- **About the USA: Thanksgiving**  
<http://usa.usembassy.de/holidays-thanksgiving.htm>
- **The History of Thanksgiving** (History Channel)  
<http://www.historychannel.com/exhibits/thanksgiving/>
- **Thanksgiving Day in the United States**  
(U.S. Dept. of State/ IIP)  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/thankstories.htm>

## What's New:

### Millions More Movement

#### 10 Years Later, Still Marching for Justice

The spirit of the Million Man March proves alive and well as activists crowd the National Mall for policy changes and personal responsibility.

Echoing the Million Man March of a decade ago, a huge crowd gathered on the National Mall on Saturday to hear a star roster of black activists and artists demand social and economic equality and call for personal responsibility.

As at the event of October 1995, leaders and participants hoped it would lead to a generation of action. Speakers advanced a disparate collection of social and political demands that included the impeachment of President Bush and the rebuilding of New Orleans following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

Both the Million Man March and Saturday's Millions More Movement were organized by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, who addressed the crowd late in the afternoon. Earlier speakers included the Rev. Al Sharpton, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, and American Indian activist and actor Russell Means.

- **Millions More Movement** [http://www.millionsmoremovement.com/index\\_noflash.html](http://www.millionsmoremovement.com/index_noflash.html)
- **CNN Report on the March** <http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/10/15/millions.more.ap/>
- **New York Times** <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/16/national/16rally.html> [free subscription required]
- **Washington Post** <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/15/AR2005101501588.html> [free subscription required]



Rosa Parks at ceremony where she received the Congressional Gold Medal on Nov. 28, 1999. (© AP/WWP)

### Civil Rights Catalyst Rosa Parks Dead at 92

On December 1, 1955, African-American seamstress Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a segregated Montgomery, Alabama, bus and subsequently was fined and jailed. In the words of President George W. Bush, this "show of defiance was an act of personal courage that moved millions" and an example that "helped touch off the civil rights movement and transformed America for the better."

Read more at

<http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/Archive/2005/Oct/26-765603.html>

**Civil Rights in the U.S.** (U.S. Dept. of State/IIP)

<http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/civilrights/>



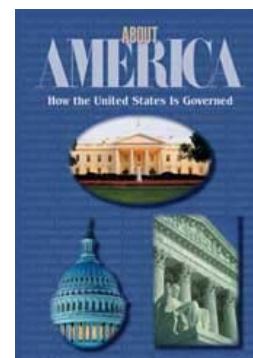
## New publication:

### About America: How the United States Is Governed

This joint publication of the State Department's Bureau of International Information Programs and Braddock Communications presents a comprehensive yet easy-to-read overview of the various levels of and institutions related to government in the U.S. "How the United States Is Governed" describes how federal, state, and local governments are elected, how they operate, and how the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government relate under the U.S. constitutional system. It also highlights how nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other institutions allow Americans to influence and shape government policy. This publication contains a glossary and a list of useful Web sites.

You can view it at:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/abtamerica/index.htm> or  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/abtamerica/governed.pdf>



\*\*\*

## Web Site Suggestions

### TeacherSource, Social Studies - PBS

[http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/soc\\_stud.htm](http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/soc_stud.htm)

The site, browsable by subject category and searchable by keyword and grade level, combines PBS video with online resources to create over 3000 lesson plans and activities, designed to meet the educational standards of the 50 states.

### American Ethnic Geography . A cultural geography of the United States and Canada

<http://www.valpo.edu/geomet/geo/courses/geo200/HomePage.html>

Mapping is a great way to make raw data meaningful, and this collection of maps illustrates how ethnic groups, religions and denominations, languages, political participation and beliefs, and socio-economic status are distributed across the US.

## Article Suggestions

### Big Brothers Big Sisters, Big Jobs

*By Christopher de la Torre, Hi Magazine, October 2005*

Big brothers big sisters is trying to make a positive difference in the world - one kid at a time. When David Zweifler, assistant vice president of G.S. Schwartz & Co. Inc. in New York City, decided in 1999 to join Big Brothers Big Sisters, one of the largest and oldest mentoring programs in the world, he found himself unexpectedly nervous. What if this is a real chore? he thought..... Read more at [http://www.hiinternational.com/articles/art1\\_en.cfm?topicId=1&id=455](http://www.hiinternational.com/articles/art1_en.cfm?topicId=1&id=455)

### We the People: Black Population in the United States: 2000

McKinnon, Jesse D.; Bennett, Claudette E.

*U.S. Census Bureau, August 2005, online edition*

This report provides a portrait of the Black or African American population in the United States and discusses sex differences within this population at the national level. It is part of the Census 2000 Special Reports series that presents several demographic, social, and economic

characteristics collected from Census 2000. McKinnon and Claudette E. Bennett are both with the Racial Statistics Branch at the U.S. Census Bureau.

Full text at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/censr-25.pdf>

### **German Self-Definition Against the U.S.**

Richard Herzinger

*Internationale Politik, Fall 2005, v6 #3, pp35-41*

"It's not easy to explain why Germans are so irritated with their American foster-father. Why has the mood in Germany turned so vehemently against the United States?" In this essay, the author argues "that Germany's dissociation of itself from America is more about identity and political history than about realpolitik." *Richard Herzinger is the German correspondent of the Swiss Weekly Weltwoche in Berlin. (Full text available at <http://www.internationalepolitik.de/>)*

### **Transatlantic Trends 2005**

*A project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Compagnia di San Paolo with additional support from the Luso-American Foundation and Fundación BBVA, published September 7, 2005*

"For the fourth year in a row, the Transatlantic Trends survey of American and European opinion looks into the issues shaping the U.S.-European relationship, including threat perceptions, global leadership, superpowers, and general feelings toward each other. This year, additional questions were asked about the European Union, democracy promotion, human rights in China, and Iran. Despite a flurry of diplomatic efforts on both sides of the Atlantic to improve relations, public opinion has not shifted much from last year. Our findings show that divisions noted in 2004 remain strong, although things have not worsened much. Europeans are still skeptical of U.S. leadership and Bush's handling of foreign policy, while Americans still want to work together with Europe on global issues, despite a slight downturn of such feelings since last year."

Full text at <http://www.transatlantictrends.org/>

**Three of these articles were taken from InfoAlert** - InfoAlert highlights recent articles and reports from leading U.S. journals and policy sources and provides informed commentary on international and domestic issues. Many articles are available "full text," some articles maybe password-protected. More articles are available through our InfoAlert service at <http://infoalert.usembassy.de>.

To register for a password, please contact us at [infoalert.de@state.gov](mailto:infoalert.de@state.gov).

\*\*\*

#### **Impressum:**

US-Generalkonsulat Leipzig \* Information Resource Center \*

Wilhelm-Seyffferth-Str. 4 \* 04107 Leipzig \*

Tel.: (0341) 213 84 25 \* Fax: (0341) 213 84 43 \* E-Mail: [ircleipzig@state.gov](mailto:ircleipzig@state.gov)

Internet: <http://www.usembassy.de/germany/irc/>

Bitte senden Sie Ihre Kommentare an [ircleipzig@state.gov](mailto:ircleipzig@state.gov) -

Wir nehmen Ihre Anregungen gerne auf.

\*\*\*